FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Early PRINTING *in* NOVA SCOTIA

Marjory Whitelaw

NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

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Nova Scotia Museum Complex

Nova Scotia

Department of
Education

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Halifax, Nova Scotia
1987

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Steven Slipp designed the book, and out of his own knowledge has added greatly to its interest and visual pleasure. To have been able to draw on the experience and talents of so many people has made my own part in putting this book together a delightful collective experience.

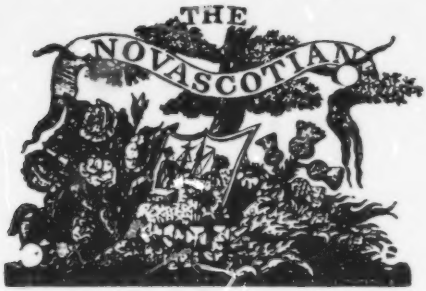
I am very grateful, also, for a most useful grant from the Canadian Printing Industries Association, which greatly assisted with the research and writing of this small book.

MARJORY WHITELAW
Halifax, Nova Scotia
May 1987

IMPRESSION – the act or result of pressing type to paper

The printer is the friend of intelligence, of thought; he is the friend of liberty, of freedom, of law; indeed, the printer is the friend of every man who is the friend of order – the friend of every man who can read. Of all the inventions, of all the discoveries in science or art, of all the great results in the wonderful progress of mechanical energy and skill, the printer is the only product of civilization necessary to the existence of free man.

CHARLES DICKENS



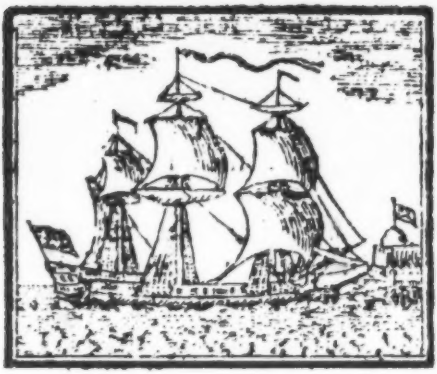
THE NOBLEST PRINTING PRESS of them all, and surely not only to Nova Scotians, is Joe Howe's old Wells, now residing in the foyer of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia in Halifax. It is an iron toggle-joint press, patented in 1819 by John Wells of Hartford, Connecticut. On this machine in 1829 Joe Howe printed Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova-Scotia*, and later, in 1835-36, the famous satirical sayings of Sam Slick of Slickville, one of Canada's earliest works of lasting literary significance! On this machine Joe Howe, as publisher of *The Novascotian*, printed the editorials in which he developed his political philosophy; this was the very press on which the mighty battle for responsible government was argued and won.

Its history is interesting because it is so typical of presses of the early colonial period. Such presses had a long life. They were few, and when they broke they were repaired, again and again; they were bought and sold, and bought and sold once more. Joe Howe's Wells press was originally owned by a man named White, in Charlottetown; he used it to print copies of a medical book and a stereotype edition of the Bible. White then brought the press to Halifax and opened a printing establishment on Brunswick Street; in due course he sold the equipment to Joe Howe. In 1841, when Howe gave up publishing to devote himself full time to Reform Party politics, he sold the press, together with *The Novascotian*, to Richard Nugent, one of his former apprentices. From Nugent the press went to J. H. Crosskill, publisher and editor of the *Morning Post*; it wound up on the premises of the tri-weekly *Morning Chronicle*, perhaps as a curiosity, perhaps as a symbol of Nova Scotia's great man.

PRINTING BEGAN in the British colonies of America during the first half of the 17th century. The first press arrived in 1638, from England; it came to Cambridge, across the river from Boston, to provide Harvard College with a printing service. This was a tiny beginning, but during the next hundred years or so the Boston–Cambridge area became the stronghold of the printing trade in America. These first Boston printers were the ancestors (both lineal and in the trade) of Bartholomew Green (1699-1751), who brought his experience and his printing press to Halifax in 1751, only two years after Halifax was founded.[2]

It is important to place these developments in the printing trade against the political and social background of the time. In the mid-18th century the British and French were playing out their years of conflict in North America. Much of this struggle for territory was centred on Nova Scotia, and particularly on Louisbourg, which was vital to the French: Louisbourg guarded the approach to the St. Lawrence River and Quebec. France was thunderstruck when, in 1745, she lost her impregnable fortress to amateur Yankee soldiers, Pepperell's volunteer army from Boston flying the British flag. To the British, Louisbourg was a pawn in a bigger game, and the government in London handed it back to France by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. The rationale for this act was that Nova Scotia and the New England fisheries could be protected more effectively by erecting a fortress on the mainland. In June of 1749, therefore, the British fleet dropped anchor in Chebucto Harbour, bringing 3,000 discharged soldiers, sailors and settlers, their families and their supplies. They called the place Halifax, after George Dunk-Montagu, Lord Halifax, President of the Board of Trade. The fortress, with its superb harbour, was to defend the North Atlantic, New England and the Nova Scotia fishing grounds against the French.

New England saw it as offering interesting business opportunities, and in the next year New Englanders moved to Halifax in some numbers. By August of 1750 there were already sufficient merchants in Halifax to form an association for the benefit of trade. To this fledgling, turbulent capital came Bartholomew Green from Boston, in 1751, bringing



Detail of corner headpieces from an early issue of the Halifax Gazette.

with him his wooden press and supply of type. He had been born in Massachusetts, one of the third generation of this famous dynasty of printers. Green's grandfather Samuel, effectively the father of printing in America, had set up his own printing office in Cambridge. Samuel's son, the first Bartholomew, printed the first newspaper in America, the *Boston Newsletter* (1704-1776), and had been printer to Harvard College for forty years. Sons and grandsons had become printers. The Bartholomew Green who came to Halifax was one of more than twenty printers in three generations of the Green family.

Green already knew Louisbourg; he had been commissioned a second lieutenant in Pepperell's expedition of 1745. He was a middle-aged man with his own reasonably successful business in Boston, but "a disposition to serve His Majesty and my Native Country" had caused him to volunteer. When the fighting was ended and he returned to Boston, he found he was unable to rebuild his business satisfactorily. It is quite likely that he came to Halifax with the hope that a new government capital would require a lot of government printing.

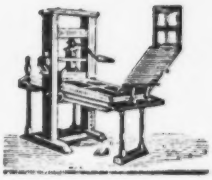
Green died, however, after only a few weeks in Halifax and before he could open his business. His Boston partner, John Bushell (1715-1761), may have been planning to join him. In any case Bushell came to Halifax, took over Green's business and his premises on Grafton Street near Duke Street, and set up the first printing office in the vast territory that was to become Canada.[3] It was he who, on March 23, 1752, laid the foundations of Canadian journalism when he printed the

famous first issue of Canada's first newspaper, the weekly *Halifax Gazette*[4] He was backed by two men: Otis Little, King's Attorney in Nova Scotia, and an unnamed Bostonian.

HALIFAX GAZETTE.

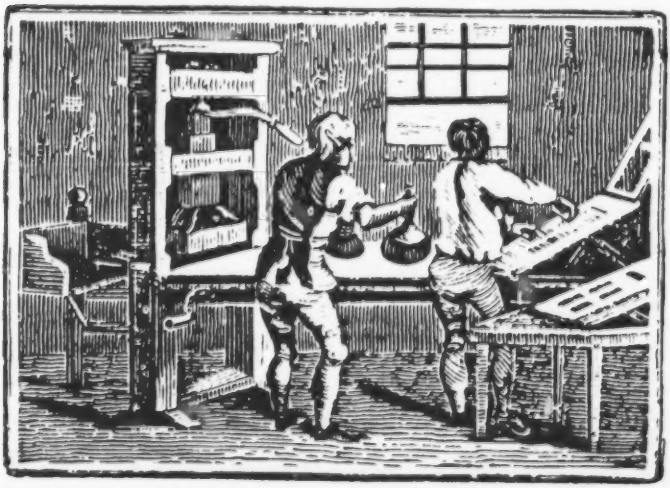
MONDAY, March 23. 1752.

The first newspaper printed in Canada. by Bushell at Halifax. March 23. 1752.



THE WOODEN PRESS that Green brought with him, and on which Bushell printed that first newspaper, was known as a "common" press, and would not have been large; it would have been easy enough to ship it from Boston to Halifax by sea, a voyage of four or five days in a small vessel. Gutenberg had developed his idea of using movable type in the 1440s; in the centuries since then some important improvements had been achieved in the "common" press, but until 1800 the presses of Europe and America were built with a wooden frame and were essentially unchanged since the beginning of printing. They retained the downward-acting screw that Gutenberg had preferred to the beam-presses used in oil and wine presses since Roman days. Originally the screw itself had been made of wood, but at a very early stage the better-wearing iron screw was introduced.

The male part was made by wrapping a cord carefully around the shaft, then filing down the space between. For the female part, a spiral strip of iron was welded to the inside of a hole. Since the thread was coarse, speed was slowed by the necessity of pulling twice on the bar, between shifting the bed farther under the platen. Top speed for such a press was 200 sheets an hour, printed on one side of the paper. It required two men to operate the press.



The wooden press had many disadvantages, one of the most serious being the necessity to pull each sheet twice. As printing techniques developed, parts were increasingly made of metal, and in time this weighty accumulation put too much stress on the wooden frame and often caused it to break. But until the introduction of all-metal presses in England about 1800, these wooden presses handled all printing.[5]

In British North America most presses had been imported from England. Bartholomew Green might have bought his second-hand, or could have obtained it from a member of his family. It was also possible to have a local carpenter or craftsman put one together, and very possible that the members of the talented Green family could have made their own presses.

Halifax (St. Paul' Church in centre), drawn by Richard Short, 1759. House with weather vane behind church was the Bushell Henry printing office.

THE PRINTING OFFICE in small colonial towns was the centre for the distribution of news and information, and every colonial printer published, or tried to publish, some sort of newspaper. In its earliest years the *Halifax Gazette* followed the pattern set by colonial papers in the older American colonies. It was a modest affair; two columns on both sides of a half sheet of foolscap sufficed for local purposes. Normally about a quarter of the paper dealt with Nova Scotian matters – government proclamations and announcements, ship arrivals, advertisements of goods for sale, sometimes notices about runaway slaves. Only on very rare occasions would there be any kind of editorial comment about major events, but there would be several columns devoted to news and comment on European, American and West Indian affairs, all lifted from New England or English papers.

THE
Boſton-
AND
COUNTRY
Gazette,
JOURNAL.
Containing the freſheſt Advices, Foreign and Domeſtic.
MONDAY, March 14. 1768.

An example of the Colonial weekly newspaper style which could well have influenced the Halifax Gazette. *Canada's first newspaper.*

As the only printer in town, Bushell also undertook job printing for the local merchants. One piece that has been preserved by the Massachusetts Historical Society is a price list from the Halifax firm of Nathans and Hart, dealers in liquors and wines, food commodities and building supplies, and the "produce of Halifax" – fish. Bushell printed this in 1752, and it is one of the earliest examples of printing in Canada.

He also printed whatever government documents were needed. At the suggestion of Governor Duquesne of Quebec, Governor Hopson of Nova Scotia issued what was in all probability the first bilingual publication in Canada: a 1752 document called *A Cartel for the Exchange of Deserters*

(Cartel pour l'Echange des Deserteurs). From time to time there also would be notices such as Governor Lawrence's May 20, 1758 proclamation calling for an elected House of Representatives.

Bushell's first official task for the Government of Nova Scotia was unhappily prophetic: a six-page pamphlet dated 6 December 1752 containing "An Act for the relief of debtors". Bushell was apparently a good workman but a poor businessman. He was frequently in debt, at times owing money to his backers, his assistant, his landlord and others. His connection with the paper grew increasingly shaky. In 1754 the provincial secretary, Richard Bulkeley, took over editorial control of the paper, and in 1758 a young German, Anthony Henry (1734-1800), became Bushell's assistant.

Anthony Henry (Anton Heinrich) was the third printer to come to Halifax. He was born in Montbéliard (France) of German parents, and knew English, French and German. We can suppose that he had served a regular apprenticeship in the printing trade in Europe; he came to Halifax, however, not as a printer but as a bandsman in one of General Amherst's regiments, after Louisbourg had finally fallen to the British.

There's an interesting theory about the way in which Henry joined Bushell. Amherst followed the thrifty practice of allowing the private soldiers in his army to earn their living locally where possible, and in Halifax he issued a proclamation stating that the soldiers could work for the citizens. Thus, soon afterwards, Henry found himself setting type for Bushell. It was not long before he was doing much of the printing.

This document is in all probability the first bilingual publication in Canada (N.S. Legislative Library).

A

CARTEL

For the Exchange of *Deserters*

WHEREAS His Excellency M. Dieu sieur *Duquesne*, Governor [illegible] of *New-France* and it's Depen[illegible] cies, &c. &c. &c. has signified to His Excellency *Peregrine Thomas Hopson*, Esq; Captain General, Governor in Chief, Vice-Admiral of the Province of *Nova-Scotia* or *Acadia*, and Colonel of one of His Majesty's Regiments of Foot, by his Letter bearing Date the 30th of *September*, 1752. his Proposals that a Cartel should be made between them for the Return of all Soldiers that shall desert either of their Majesties their Ma[illegible]'s

CARTEL

Pour l'Echange des *Deserteurs.*

VU'AUTANT que Son Excellence Monsieur *Duquesne*, Gouverneur General de la *Nouvelle-France* et de ses Dependances, &c. &c. &c. a signifié à Son Excellence *Peregrine Thomas Hopson*, Ecuyer, Capitaine General, Gouverneur en Chef, Vice Amiral de la Province *de la Nouvelle-Ecosse*, ou *L'Acadie*; et Colonel d'un Regiment d' Infanterie au Service de *sa Majesté Britannique*, par sa Lettre datée le 30.e *Septembre* 1752. ses propos pour l'Etablissement d'un Cartel entre eux pour la Re[illegible] des Soldats qui deserteront les Servi-

In September of 1760 he was made a partner, and after Bushell died in 1761 took control of the business. Although government printing took much of his time, he continued to publish the *Halifax Gazette*. With financial support from the government, he improved his equipment and expanded his business, and in the autumn of 1765 was able to hire an extra assistant, Isaiah Thomas from Boston, sixteen years old and bursting with idealism and republican principles. He was an orphan and had been apprenticed to his trade when he was only six years old; he seems to have reached the status of journeyman by the time he arrived in Halifax.

On November 1, 1765, the notorious Stamp Act became law in America. Business and legal transactions were to be taxed through payment for the stamps affixed to the relevant documents, and the proceeds of the Act were to help pay for the enormous cost of keeping a standing army in the British territories in America as protection against the French and the Indians. It is perhaps useful to remind ourselves of what "America" meant in 1765, before the American Revolution: not only Nova Scotia (which until 1784 included what is now New Brunswick), Quebec and Newfoundland, but also the original thirteen colonies, East and West Florida, Bermuda, the Bahamas and the West Indian Islands. In London it seemed entirely reasonable that the colonists should help pay for their own protection.

Half penny stamp (die #7) from Halifax Gazette, *9 January 1766 (N.S. Legislative Library).*

Almost everything that affected Henry's business was liable to tax. There was a levy of one half-penny for each printed copy of the *Gazette*, as well as a prohibitive tax of two shillings for each advertisement. Publishers were required to purchase their paper from the Stamp Distributor (or Stamp Master); this paper, having been manufactured and already taxed in England, was far more expensive than the low-quality paper then being made in Pennsylvania. Printers calculated that the new paper would cost approximately four and a half times the old. Henry raised his subscription price by 50%.

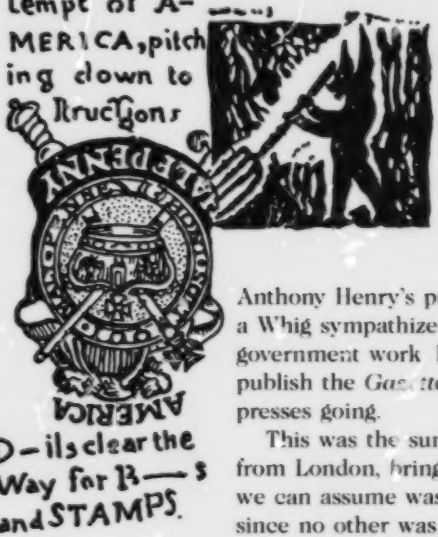
Many of the "American" publishers continued putting out their newspapers on the old unstamped paper; others simply shut down until the Act was repealed in 1766. Only four papers continued operations by using the stamped paper: two in Barbados, one in Antigua, and the *Halifax Gazette*.

But Henry had his own methods of making protest. During that winter of 1765-66 some issues of the *Gazette* carried mourning borders and, on occasion, a woodcut of a skull and

Skull and crossbones caricature of newspaper stamp in black ink from Halifax Gazette. *19 December 1765 (N.S. Legislative Library).*

crossbones took the place of the revenue stamp. On November 7, 1765, the entire back page of the *Gazette* was devoted to reports of resistance to the Stamp Act at Philadelphia and other places. Later in the month, presumably with Henry's compliance (though he denied it), Isaiah Thomas published a paragraph describing Nova Scotian opposition to the Act. In these acts of defiance Henry was giving voice to considerable public opinion. This must have been the first time the colonial press of Nova Scotia was used as a political platform. Bulkeley was furious and withdrew government support. Isaiah Thomas was expelled from Nova Scotia and sent back to Boston; ironically, this was to his great benefit, for in due course he became the leading printer in America and the author of the still valuable *History of Printing in America* (1810).

The Stamp Act proved to be an inefficient irritant and was generally ignored. In March of 1766 it was withdrawn. But



Half-penny stamp (die #3) with devil and pitchfork woodblock from the Halifax Gazette. *13 February 1766 (N.S. Legislative Library).*

Anthony Henry's protest against the Act had marked him as a Whig sympathizer, and for four years he was given no more government work. By mid-1766 he could no longer afford to publish the *Gazette*, and he turned to job printing to keep his presses going.

This was the summer Robert Fletcher arrived in Halifax from London, bringing with him a new printing press (which we can assume was the "common" press with wooden frame, since no other was available), as well as a good stock of books and stationery. He immediately opened a shop. There is some suggestion that the government officials who had been displeased with Henry had invited Fletcher to come to Halifax. In any case they encouraged Fletcher to set about producing a newspaper of his own, and on August 15, 1766, he brought out the first issue of a new semi-official weekly, the *Nova-Scotia Gazette*.

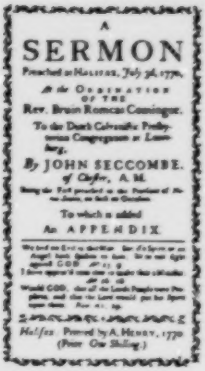
Probably the first illustration in a printed book in Canada. Nova Scotia Calendar, *1776 (Dalhousie University Library, Special Collections).*

Technically, Fletcher was a better printer than Henry, whose work in contrast was rather rough and inelegant, with less of a feel for design and balance of the page. But Fletcher seems to have found it difficult to keep the paper going, and was soon depending on government printing, the staple of printers in such small colonial capitals.

By 1769 Anthony Henry's fortunes had mended, and he was able to return to the newspaper business with a new publication, the *Nova-Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser.* The *Chronicle* quickly became more popular than Fletcher's *Gazette*; it was cheaper and its views somewhat more liberal. Within a year Fletcher found himself retiring from the newspaper business, and Henry absorbed the *Nova-Scotia Gazette* into his own paper.

The Tory Fletcher licked his wounds, sold his press to a Boston printer and concentrated on his bookstore, one of the first in Canada. To books he soon added general merchandise, for it must have taken more than books to keep a man afloat in Halifax in the 1770s. How many optimists there must have been in Halifax in those years! Businesses started up and failed as regularly as summer led to autumn. Fletcher went into bankruptcy in 1782; his stock and household effects were sold at public auction, and we hear no more of him in Halifax after 1785.

Anthony Henry was once again the only skilled printer in Nova Scotia. He had modified his Whig views to an



A
SERMON
Preached at Halifax, July 3d, 1770,
At the ORDINATION
OF THE
Rev. Bruin Romcas Comingue,
To the Dutch Calvinistic Presbyterian Congregation at Lunenburg.
By JOHN SECCOMBE,
of Chester, A. M.
To which is added
An APPENDIX.
Halifax: Printed by A. Henry, 1770.
(Price One Shilling.)

Cover page of an Ordination Sermon *printed by Anthony Henry, the first religious work produced in Nova Scotia.*

acceptably discreet level and retrieved his position vis-à-vis the government. In 1788 he was officially appointed King's Printer.

In his years in Halifax Anthony Henry produced a tremendous amount of work: *Nova Scotia Statutes*, the religious writing of the famous evangelist Henry Alline, almanacs in German and in English. His Nova Scotia almanac for 1776 included what is probably the first illustration in a book printed in Canada – a woodcut of Halifax harbour. Something like 200 items, exclusive of newspapers, passed through Henry's presses.[6] He never attained Fletcher's printerly skills, nor those of John Howe who followed him as King's Printer. But by the time he died in 1800, his consistent work over so many years lent to the position of King's Printer an authority and security it had not enjoyed before.

German edition of the Nova Scotia Calendar printed by Anthony Henry in several annual editions with a woodcut cover (Public Archives of N.S.).

FOR THE EARLY NOVA SCOTIAN PRINTERS such as Bushell, Henry and Fletcher, all supplies and equipment had of course to be imported. This was done most easily from Boston. It could take a year for an order to arrive from England.

Paper probably came from Pennsylvania, where it had been made since 1690. Although in its earlier phase this paper was not of very good quality, it was certainly adequate for colonial newspapers. Papermaking did not begin in Canada until 1800, and in Nova Scotia not until 1819.

Type was expensive, for a printer required five or six fonts in different sizes, in capitals and lower-case letters, and in italic as well. From time to time it had to be replaced; constant use, particularly under the vertical pressure of the wooden press, wore it down. Most of the early printers ordered their type from William Caslon in London. The first regular American type foundry was that of Christopher Sauer, which was started at Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1772. Sauer imported the appliances from Germany, with moulds for three sizes of German type and some English script. He intended to make types exclusively for his own use. Jacob Bey, assistant to Sauer, withdrew from Sauer's operation and set up his own foundry, making type for printers in Philadelphia. Thus he was the first in America to supply type for the industry.

In a letter dated October 27, 1753, Benjamin Franklin addresses his friend William Strahan, the great British printer, and gives him a list of his requirements that printers today may find interesting. Franklin is proposing to set a nephew up in business in New Haven, Connecticut.

A SPECIMEN
OF
PRINTING TYPES
BELONGING TO
Benjamin Franklin Bache's PRINTING OFFICE,
PHILADELPHIA.

* *French Canon Rom.*
Tandem aliq
ABCDEFGJ

* French Canon Ital.
Tandem aliq
ABCDEFG

French Canon Rom.
Tandem aliqu

French Canon Ital.
Tandem aliquan

"I would therefore request you," he writes to Strahan, "to bespeak for me of Mr. Caslon, viz., 300 lbs. long primer, with figures and signs sufficient for an almanac.

300 lbs. pica	)	
100 lbs. great primer	)	
300 lbs. English	)	Roman and Italic
60 lbs. double pica	)	
50 lbs. two-line English	)	
40 lbs. two-line great primer	)	

30 lbs. two-line capitals and flowers for different fonts
20 lbs. quotations

As Mr. Caslon has different long primers, picas, etc., I beg of your judgment to choose and order the best.

To which add:

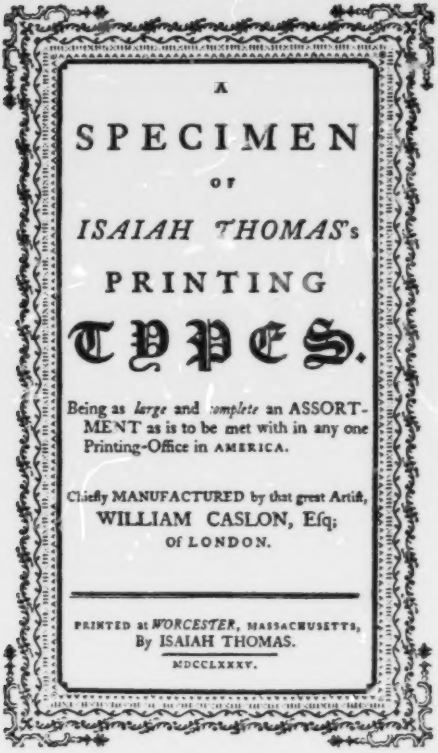
The inkball (or ballstock) used for inking type is padded and covered with leather.

A complete good press
2 pair blankets[7]
2 pair ballstocks
Some reglets, gutter-sticks, side-sticks, quoins, etc.
3-pair chases, of different sizes; 1 the biggest, demi.
2 folio galleys, each with four shies
4 quarto galleys
A few facs, heads and tail pieces; three or four of each
2 doz. brass rules
2 good composing sticks
2 kegs of ink; one weak, the other strong"

The other essential was, of course, printer's ink. Quality printing ink had to be imported from England, but even the best ink was made from fairly simple ingredients, and many an apprentice learned that one of his duties was to try to produce ink fit for print from a mixture of boiled linseed oil (or varnish) and lampblack.

During the eight years of the American Revolution, nothing could be imported into New England from Britain. After the Revolution, imports required permits. Isaiah Thomas commented:

"The printing ink used in this country, until later, was chiefly imported from Europe . . . . Most of the bad printing in the United States, particularly in New England during the revolutionary war, was occasioned by the wretched ink and more wretched paper which printers were then under the necessity of using."



A

SPECIMEN

OF

ISAIAH THOMAS's

PRINTING

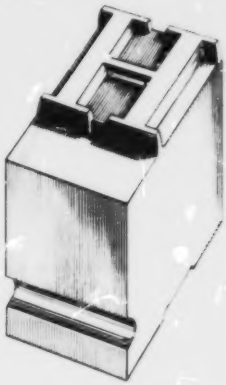
TYPES.

Being as *large* and *complete* an ASSORTMENT as is to be met with in any one Printing-Office in AMERICA.

Chiefly MANUFACTURED by that great Artift,
WILLIAM CASLON, Eſq;
Of LONDON.

PRINTED at *WORCESTER*, MASSACHUSETTS,
By ISAIAH THOMAS.
MDCCLXXXV.

Title page: Isaiah Thomas's type catalogue. Worcester. Massachusetts. 1785.



Individual pieces of metal type like this were combined to make words. Pages of typeset text were then inked and impressed onto paper.

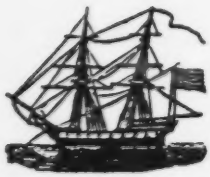
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION changed everything. The new nation was obliged to conserve foreign exchange: this (and the new proud exuberance) gave great impetus to the development of all kinds of local businesses. The production of type, paper and ink all grew into separate and important enterprises. For printers, the difficulties of obtaining supplies were over. But Boston, which had been the centre of the book trade (including printing) throughout the pre-revolutionary period, lost its preferred position. By 1800 the centre had moved to Philadelphia – not only of publishing, but of manufacturing for all the printing trades.

The American Revolution increased the population of Nova Scotia. About 12,000 Loyalists settled in various places, including Halifax, Shelburne, Annapolis Royal and Sydney. It was the American Revolution that brought the widowed Mrs. Margaret Draper to Halifax. She had been Margaret Green and had married her cousin Richard Draper. The Drapers were almost as illustrious a printing family as the Greens; it must sometimes have been difficult to avoid marriage between the two dynasties, especially since it was so customary for apprentices to marry their masters' daughters.

It is also possible that the many marriages between one printing family and another were partly the result of unhygienic conditions in the shop. Certainly many printers died at an early age. The men worked in bad light, generally on an earth floor. Lye was everywhere in the shop, made from water poured over wood ash and of a strength to dissolve ink from the type formes that needed to be cleaned. It must have been a happy solution to a widow's problems when she could take as a second husband a printer who not only understood the business but the presses as well.

Richard Draper had recently been the editor of the steadfastly Loyalist paper the *Boston Newsletter*; it was the first paper to be permanently established in the colonies, and in its early years had been printed by Draper's grandfather, the first Bartholomew Green. Draper had had a young apprentice who, after serving his time, had become his assistant. After Richard Draper's death in 1774, Margaret Draper promoted the young assistant to be junior partner. With his help, and at some risk, she continued to publish the *Boston Newsletter* in Boston as the voice of the Loyalist cause. The young man's name was John Howe (1754-1835).

He was already a devoted Loyalist. The early incidents leading up to the American Revolution had taken place in Howe's Bostonian youth; he had been a witness to the extraordinary scenes of violence on the night of December 16, 1773, when outraged colonists, under the leadership of Samuel Adams and Paul Revere, had disguised themselves as Indians, boarded three tea ships in Boston harbour and tossed the valuable cargo into the water. Howe had no sympathy whatever for this act.

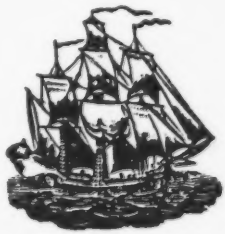


Mrs. Draper and Howe continued to put out the paper during the siege of Boston – the only one to appear in that period – but when the British evacuated Boston in 1776 she recognized defeat. She closed the paper down after a continu-

ous run of 72 years, packed up her wooden presses and her cases of type and took ship for Halifax, part of the Loyalist drift to Nova Scotia. John Howe came with her. When she left Halifax after only a few months and went to live in England, she presented Howe with all the equipment to become a printer-publisher.

John Howe did not begin business in Halifax immediately. He went first to Newport, Rhode Island, and from January of 1777 published the *Newport Gazette* in support of the British cause, until the British evacuated that town too, in October 1779. By the end of 1780 Howe was back in Halifax with his very young and beautiful wife, Martha Minns, and Martha's brother William. Howe set up his printing office in a house at the corner of Sackville and Barrington Streets and here, on December 28, 1780, published the first number of the *Halifax Journal*, a newspaper that survived until 1870. The big news story of that first year was the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia. The outcome of the revolutionary war was now certain, and the trickle of refugees into Nova Scotia soon grew into a torrent.

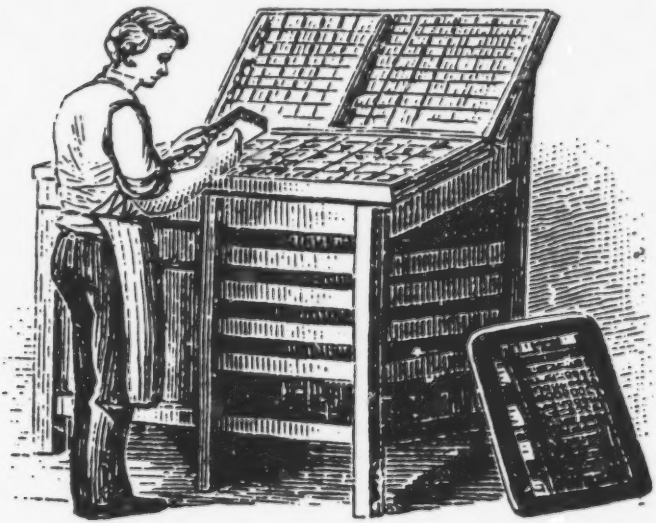
John Howe and William Minns were not the only Loyalist printers to come to Nova Scotia. In 1783 nearly 9,000 people arrived in Shelburne (Port Roseway), on the south shore, in the main Loyalist migration. Among the refugees coming to this pretty, doomed little town were six printers. In 1783 James and Alexander Robertson re-established in Shelburne the *Royal American Gazette* they had published in New York. On the same press, in 1784, James Robertson junior and his two partners, Thomas and James Swords, published a second paper, the *Port Roseway Gazetteer and the Shelburne Advertiser*. Then in 1785 a third newspaper appeared, the *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, published by another victim of the Revolution, James Humphreys.



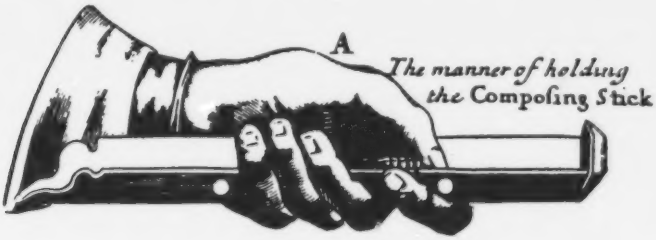
The story of Shelburne's instant founding and quick decline is too well known to repeat here. In only five years, however, the population of the town had fallen to about 600; Alexander Robertson had died, his brother James had taken his press to Charlottetown, and the Swords brothers had returned to New York and success in the bookselling business. Only James Humphreys remained in Shelburne and continued to publish his *Packet* for some years.

IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD, printing still was a craft, perhaps even an art, attaching to itself still a slight aura of mediaeval mystery. In the small printing offices that existed in Nova Scotia, the master printer had to have many skills; he would often gather the news, write it, edit the copy, perhaps even set the type and print it with the help of a journeyman and one or two apprentices.

In his early years as a Halifax printer, John Howe lived above the shop on Barrington Street. He was a family man, running a family business. Like all printers, he was dependent on apprentices. He took on his young brother-in-law, William Minns, to learn the printer's trade. Colonial printing offices were frequently household affairs, with wives and daughters helping to get the paper out or the broadsheet printed. John Bushell trained his daughter to help him in the printing shop; at a later date, Susan Ann Howe, Joe's wife, often worked with the apprentices and edited *The Novascotian* while Joe was touring the province. Women were skilful typesetters; furthermore, like apprentices, they were conveniently cheap labour, for the journeyman pressmen and compositors who were "out of their time" were the highest paid craftsmen in British North America.



Setting type by hand and printing it on the slow and cumbersome wooden presses was a tedious business. The type was kept in shallow drawers or cases, divided into many compartments. Minuscules were kept in one case and capitals and small capitals in another – hence "lower" and "upper" cases. There were separate compartments for each punctuation mark, each ornament or flower. The apprentice printer had to memorize the arrangement of characters in the case. He held the composing stick in his left hand while he picked up the letters with his right and inserted each letter face uppermost, but with the feet facing away from the compositor and reading from left to right. Setting the type was only the first stage. After the page was printed, the lines of type had to be broken up and each tiny character replaced individually into its correct compartment, ready for re-use.



A woodcut which appeared in Joseph Moxon's Mechanick Exercises *in 1683, first treatise on printing.*

George L. Parker describes the wooden press and its operation: it ". . . consisted of a sturdy upright wooden frame with a table set into it, and these two sections held the two heavy surfaces which made contact during the printing operation. The stone surface of the table, known as the coffin or bed, contained the forme, that is the device for holding the set-up type. . . . The type forme was locked into an iron frame or chase, which held the type securely in place. . . . The movable wooden surface during the impression, the platen, was attached to the top of the upright frame, and lowered onto the bed by means of a screw worked by a lever. . . . Attached to the bed were two folding plates the same size as it, the inner one known as the tympan, and the other one the frisket. . . .

"Operating the press was a slow procedure that required the services of two men. Once the type was set in the forme, there were approximately thirteen movements in the printing of a single sheet. While one man inked the type forme with two inking balls, the other man placed the sheet in the

tympan. First, he folded the frisket on the tympan, and then the tympan itself was folded on the forme. The frisket and tympan ensured that even pressure would be applied from the platen and that excess ink would not spoil the margins of the printed page. Now the bed and its forme were rolled in under the platen, which was then lowered. This operation was known as the impression. The impression was then released by raising the platen . . . . The tympan was raised, then the frisket, and the printed sheet was removed and hung up to dry. Two men could turn out from 100 to 150 sheets an hour on the older Renaissance presses, while on the later eighteenth century presses, theoretically they could turn out a maximum of 240 sheets an hour, printed on one side." [8]

The conventional agreement signed by master and apprentice (or "devil") laid down the conditions for each. The apprentice agreed (in part) that:

". . . He shall not waste his said Master's Goods, nor lend them unlawfully to any; He shall not commit fornication nor contract Matrimony within the said Term; At Cards, Dice, or any other unlawful Game he shall not play, whereby his said Master may have Damage. . . . He shall not absent himself Day nor Night from his said Master's Service, without his leave; nor haunt Ale-house, Taverns or Play-houses; but in all Things behave himself as a faithful Apprentice ought to do, during the said Term."

For his part, the Master agreed to

". . . Use the utmost of his Endeavour to teach or cause to be taught, or instructed, the said Apprentice, in the trade or Mystery of a Printer. . .and procure and provide for him sufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel, Lodging and Washing, fitting for an Apprentice, during the said Term of Seven Years, and . . .the said [Apprentice] shall . . . have four Quarters night Schooling, and that at the expiration of the said term of Apprenticeship, the said Master shall give him the said Apprentice a new Suit of Cloaths, suitable to such an Apprentice." [9]

Soon after William Minns finished six years' apprenticeship with John Howe he started his own paper, the *Weekly Chronicle*, so that in 1786 the citizens of Halifax were enjoying a choice of three newspapers: the *Nova-Scotia Gazette* of Anthony Henry, still somewhat favouring the Whig position, the Tory *Halifax Journal* of John Howe, and the *Weekly Chronicle* of William Minns. Minns, however, proved to be a lacklustre newspaperman and was never a very serious rival to John Howe, who became the leading printer

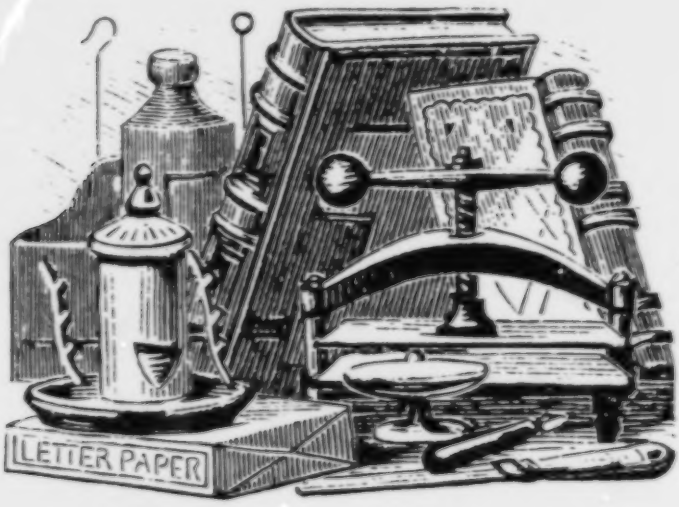
in the colony. He was well qualified to fill this role.

Howe demonstrated himself to be a man of outstanding kindliness and integrity, a Tory who revered not so much the British throne as the stirring contribution that Britons had made in political philosophy, the arts, science and literature. He was himself widely read in these subjects.

Howe was a much more skilful printer than Anthony Henry, as well as a more literate publisher. In the *Halifax Journal* he reported the debates in the Legislature so ably that at least one fellow Loyalist, the member of the Assembly for Annapolis Royal, wanted to make him King's Printer in place of Anthony Henry. But Howe refused to have the appointment taken from Henry, and it was not until after the latter died in 1800 that John Howe became printer to the King, in 1801. Two years later, in 1803, he also was appointed Deputy Postmaster General of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, offices subsequently held by his eldest son, John Howe junior, who had joined the family business. These official positions were not greatly profitable, but they

carried considerable influence and prestige in the ever-growing colony, and – if nothing else – gave the printer-publishers first crack at reporting provincial government news.

Gazetteers, almanacs and directories all provided printers with useful bread-and-butter work. In addition, printers frequently sold stationery, ledgers, pens and ink, and sometimes carried a small stock of books imported from England or Boston. Job printing for missionaries, church societies and masonic lodges also helped keep the presses running.



Nova Scotia was considered to be a mission field; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent Anglicans; other groups provided Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists. There were many doctrinal and political quarrels among the various denominations. Both Henry and Howe were kept busy printing books and pamphlets for competing factions: Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists and New Lights. These were the years of the Great Awakening, the religious storm that swept through the English-speaking world in the last half of the 18th century. Its passionate spokesman in Nova Scotia was Henry Alline. He had received a religious illumination that sent him out to ride through the countryside preaching the New Light vision of hope through salvation as an alternative to the Puritan doctrine of guilt, sin and damnation. Anthony Henry printed some of Alline's sermons; John

Howe printed a Congregationalist refutation. For the Methodists, Howe reprinted some of John Wesley's writings from England.

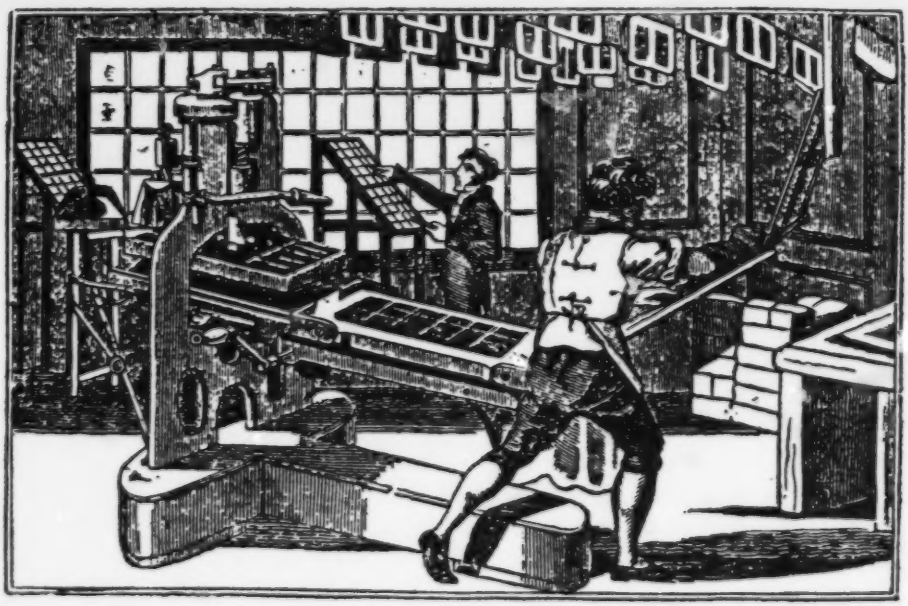
The Anglican authorities used both Howe and Henry without discrimination. Dr. Charles Inglis, the first Anglican Bishop to Nova Scotia, arrived in Halifax in 1787. He was a Loyalist who had paid dearly for his principles while rector of Trinity Church in New York during the Revolution; in Nova Scotia his wish, indeed his duty, was to create a stable and Tory society. To this end he established King's College in Windsor, and from King's in 1789 came the first Canadian periodical, the *Nova Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics and News*. The first editor was Dr. William Cochran, principal of the College; he was succeeded as editor by John Howe. The *Nova Scotia Magazine* was primarily intended to serve the needs of the Loyalist community, and thus was too specialized to last more than a few years. But it established the precedent of a publication that was something more than the various weekly newspapers.

It was undoubtedly Anthony Henry, however, who printed the Reverend James MacGregor's anti-slavery pamphlet in the form of a reprimand addressed to his colleague in Truro, Daniel Cock. MacGregor had arrived young and green from Scotland in 1786, a missionary to the Scots Presbyterians in Pictou County. The Anti-slavery Movement was strong in Scotland. When MacGregor heard that Dr. Cock had bought a slave, he took up his pen. "Reverend Sir," he wrote. "Permit me to speak to you freely of one matter in which I am persuaded that you offend your God. . . . All men at their birth are equally naked, helpless and destitute of marks of authority. You could not distinguish between his Royal Highness and the child of the poorest beggar that walks the streets. It is a maxim equally agreeable to scripture and reason. . . that all mankind are born upon a level, and that no man can rule over another but by mutual consent. . . ."

The rebuke was printed and circulated throughout the province as *A Letter to a Clergyman, Urging him to set free a Black Girl he held in Slavery*. It was no doubt the first condemnation of slavery that most Nova Scotians had heard, and MacGregor's suggestion that all men are equal in the sight of the Lord must have seemed almost sacrilegious to many people. The pamphlet caused great controversy in the province, especially among those Loyalists who had brought slaves with them from the American colonies.

ALTHOUGH WOODEN PRESSES continued to be useful well into the 19th century, there had hardly been a time when men had not been trying to improve their efficiency. During the last years of the 18th century, on both sides of the Atlantic, many devices were being tried: cutting the screw more evenly, changing the type of lever, using a cast-iron frame mounted on a stone base. All these experiments, however, still used the wooden frame as the basis of improvement. As late as 1807, the Scots-born Adam Ramage of Philadelphia was still experimenting with, modifying and improving the Ramage, his own version of the wooden press and the only one to achieve the distinction of a trade name. As many as 1,250 Ramage presses were manufactured; one of them eventually wound up in Joseph Howe's printing shop in Halifax. He bought it from George Renny Young, founder of *The Novascotian*, the paper that Howe himself later made so famous.

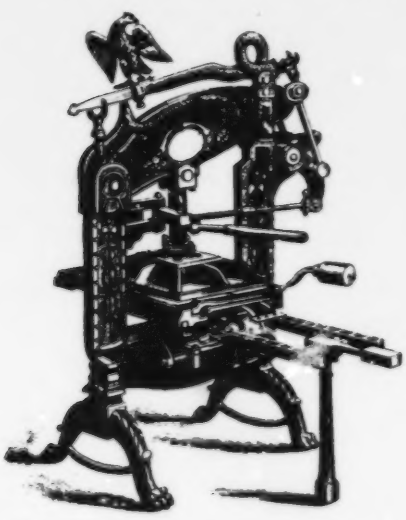
The major advance in technology came around 1800, and in England, where the Industrial Revolution had created new



The all-metal Stanhope Press was invented about 1800. It is shown here in an early nineteenth century English printshop.

techniques in casting metal, along with a new class of skilled mechanics. The man who put all this together to produce the first all-metal press was the third Earl Stanhope (1753-1826), an English aristocrat whose interest was in scientific inquiry and who had the means to develop his ideas. Stanhope's press retained the conventional screw but separated it from spindle and bar, and added a system of compound levers that greatly increased the power. The platen was double-sized, and this, with the increased power, allowed the forme to be printed at one pull. The Stanhope was, of course, far from the last word in presses, even with its later improvements. But the Stanhope principle of using compound levers was carried over into the Columbian press developed between 1800 and 1816 in Philadelphia by George Clymer.

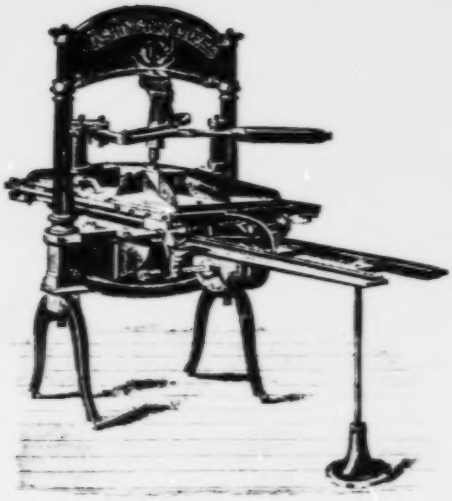
Clymer had been tinkering for years with the old wooden press, trying to make it fit the needs of the 1800s. With the Columbian he plunged into modern times, 1800s version; the Columbian was the pioneer American all-metal press, and Clymer's aim was to develop it as a press suitable for the newspaper trade. He did in fact sell a number of presses to newspaper publishers in New York and Philadelphia, but that seems to have been pretty much the extent of the market. The American west was opening up, and what was needed was a light, easily transportable press. This was not the



The Columbian Press

The Albion Press

The Wells Press (illustration by Etta Moffatt, N.S. Museum).



The Washington Press

Columbian. Clymer decided to explore the European market, and moved to England, where his presses proved far more popular than they had been in America.

Once seen, the Columbian was not easily forgotten. It was majestically decorated: symbols of Hermes, the universal messenger, on the pillars, dolphins for wisdom on the levers, and surmounting the whole the American eagle, its wings extended, grasping in its talons Jove's thunderbolts, combined with the olive-branch of Peace and the horn of Plenty. The eagle was not mere decoration; it served as a counterweight for a series of levers that replaced the screw. The Columbian represented a real advance, combining the early principle of the fulcrum with Stanhope's idea of multiple levers, and it served as a link with the Albion, the Washington and other popular hand presses of the early 19th century.

Before 1820 virtually all presses in use in the colonies had been made in Britain. But after 1820 a number of American all-metal presses began to appear on the market, more easily available than the new British models. The metal presses were not much faster than their wooden predecessors, but they produced work of better quality. When John Howe and Company replaced their old wooden presses, they would have had the choice of several new models. The Wells was popular for a number of years; in 1819 John Wells of Hartford, Connecticut, patented a press with long toggle levers, and it

was this model that Joseph Howe used for so many years.

The Albion was immensely popular over a long period. It was originally developed in the early 1820s, a kind of answer to the Columbian, and the name seems to have been accepted as a generic title for a certain type of machine. Many men improved it, many firms manufactured it. One company even made a portable model suitable for transporting overland in the United States (and no doubt useful in the Canadas also). They were manufactured in a number of European countries, and one surfaced in Singapore that possibly had been made in Japan. As late as 1940 they were still being manufactured in England.

Of all the presses available in North America, however, the most popular was the Washington. It was light in weight, yet strong. Its distinctive feature was a toggle screw, whose two halves had the appearance of an elbow. Only one simple hand-pull of the lever was required to exert great pressure. Its price, also, was reasonable: it cost, in Montreal, only $230 to $275.

WITH a growing population and an increasing number of newspapers, provincial governments had encouraged the establishment of paper mills throughout British North America. Anthony Henry Holland, publisher of the *Acadian Recorder*, had established the first paper mill in Nova Scotia in 1819, at Bedford, ten miles outside Halifax. Before the opening he ran advertisements in the *Recorder*:

RAGS RAGS, RAGS.

THE subscriber intending to erect a Paper Mill the ensuing season, he requests families to be careful of their

LINEN and COTTON RAGS.

A person will be employed in the Spring to collect them through the Town --In the mean time, they will be taken in (and a liberal price given) at No. 1, Corner of Duke and Water Streets.

A. H. HOLLAND.

Early in 1820, after the mill opened, he is advertising for help:

GIRLS WANTED.

WANTED as Apprentices at the Acadian Paper Mill, TWO GIRLS, from 10 to 12 years of age, who will be well treated. Apply to Mr. Holland. Feb. 14.

In spite of the need for paper, by March of 1820 Holland is petitioning the Assembly for financial assistance. From the petition we learn that he has been making wrapping and printing paper, that getting up his "experimental" mill has been unexpectedly expensive, and that the removal of the Naval Dockyard to Bermuda (a decision of the authorities in London deeply deplored by Halifax) has deprived him of the supply of canvas and other materials on which he had depended. He is certain that his mill will save the province at least £5,000 per annum, a substantial sum; he reminds the Assembly that in the past all governments had given financial assistance to such businesses, and that he hopes for similar treatment.

A wood engraving showing paper being handmade.

Even in Nova Scotia, newspapers were eating up more and more paper, and rags were becoming scarce and expensive. It is very probable that Charles Fenerty of Sackville, outside Halifax, was the first man in Canada to discover the process of making cheap paper out of wood fibres. In the early 1840s he succeeded in producing paper from spruce pulp, and by mid-century such paper was being produced in commercial quantities. But the paper mill at Bedford continued to operate, under a succession of names, and the advertisements for Rags Rags Rags continued to appear in the Halifax press until well past Confederation.

JOHN HOWE was married twice. His eldest son, John junior, was born of the first marriage. He became a partner in John Howe and Son and, in his turn, became King's Printer and Deputy Postmaster General. He was a conservative man, happy with the status quo; although the Howe family kept the firm running until 1860, it was left to Joseph, the youngest son and a child of the second marriage, to make the name of Howe ring across the country as the symbol of Nova Scotia.

In 1818, when Joseph was 14, he was apprenticed to his father. Joe's schooling had been haphazard; under his father's tutelage, however, his apprenticeship was to literature and learning as well as to printing. He was a voracious reader – poetry, history, literature, politics; in later years his speeches and editorials were passionately illumined by his early reading. He became by far the best orator in the province, the most powerful editorialist.

When his apprenticeship was done he decided to leave the family firm; above all he was determined not to stand in the way of John junior's children. For a couple of years he kicked his heels around Halifax and dabbled in poetry. Then, in 1827, he and a partner bought William Minns' declining *Weekly Chronicle* and changed its name to *The Acadian and General Advertiser*. He was only twenty-three and years away from becoming the province's most famous editor.

It was in fact another man, Anthony Henry Holland, who

first created the ferment that stirred Nova Scotia into an intellectual awakening. Until 1813, the year that Holland entered the scene, the Howes had a monopoly of the newspaper field. Holland was the godson of Anthony Henry; printing and newspapers were in his blood, and he did the obvious thing – he started a newspaper, the *Acadian Recorder*. He patterned the *Recorder* on the *Political Register* of London, edited by Britain's most popular journalist of the day, William Cobbett, whose particular pleasure it was to expose government misdeeds. Holland's *Recorder* was the first newspaper to criticize government policy regularly and to encourage its readers to discuss public affairs in its columns.

In 1822 Holland sold his press and newspaper to his brother Philip; he was worn out by government fractiousness and the continual sniping from a Tory paper, Edmund Ward's *Free Press*. He perhaps felt he had done as much as he could, for he had already published a number of books and pamphlets that had awakened the social conscience of the province, among them an early *Address on the Deplorable State of the Indians* (1814). He had also had real success in serializing John Young's *Letters of Agricola* (1818-1821). Young had come to Nova Scotia from Scotland, where he had observed modern farming methods. *Letters of Agricola* was written in the hope that it would give impetus to the improvement of farming methods in Nova Scotia. With the friendly support of the governor, Lord Dalhousie, Agricola's message spread throughout the province. In 1822 the *Letters* were published in book form and for many years remained a standard popular text throughout British North America.

Anthony Henry Holland's Acadian Recorder *(Public Archives of N.S.).*

ACADIAN RECORDER.

[No. 3.....Vol. 1.] SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1813. [15 shillings per annum.]

HALIFAX, N. S.: Printed and Published (every Saturday morning) by ANTHONY H. HOLLAND, at his Office, adjoining the Navy Victualling Office, Water-Street.... Where Subscriptions, Advertisements &c. will be thankfully received.

ALMANACK.

1813. JANUARY.	Sun rises	Sun sets	High water	Remarks
30 Saturday.	7 13	5	6 4	
31 Sunday.	7 12	5	6 55	New moon morning.
Feb 1, Monday.	7 11	5	7 46	18 Feb. 9h. 22m.
2 Tuesday.	7 10	5	8 38	
3 Wednesday.	7 9	5	9 28	
4 Thursday.	7 8	5	10 18	
5 Friday.	7 6	5	11 8	

SUBSCRIPTIONS

To be received by the following Gentlemen, agents for the "Acadian Recorder."

Windsor, Mich'l L. Thomas, Esq. and Rev. Dr. Bennet, jr. Horton, Rev. William Johnstone, Mr. John M. Tenny. Truro, J. M. Bent, Esq. Argyle, Capt. Henry Pinkerton. Liverpool, Joshua Newton, Judah Freeman, Elisha Cobbet, Esquires, and Mr. Thomas Boyle. Lunenburgh, Capt. Henry Wentzelmeier, and Mr. Volkmar Bernhard. Cumberland, Thomas Roach, Esq. Pictou, G. Fraser, Esq. and Rev. Mr. McCulloch. Newport, John Allison, Esq. Minas, Jona. Wentworth, Esq. St. John, [illegible]

Lunacy of the Full Magazine. At the Battle of Alexandria he rode like the Sun in the Lion, and like the Sun too, after a Summer's day of Glory, he Set in the West at the battle of Trafalgar; leaving the Ocean in a Blaze as he went Down, and in Darkness when he had Descended.

In vain to chase, when the Stronger who rules our Island shall require for the Manoeuvre of NELSON, the sailors will be "BEHOLD HIS COUNTRY WHICH HE SAVED."

Character of the Right Hon. William Pitt.

[WE are happy to be enabled to present our readers with a production of no common merit or interest; the Character of PITT, by his pupil and friend CANNING. We doubt not but that our readers will join us in acknowledging the kindness of the gentleman, who favoured us with a copy of such a masterly composition. It was written with the intention to be inserted on an Urn, and has never before been published.]

THE character of this dishonest Statesman rarely rolled on undimmed. Scarcely had by in the power of his adversaries, mighty as they were, to hurl him from the field. His eloquence occasionally rapid, strikes, and vehement; was always chaste, strong, and persuasive—not owing into acquirement, but arising into conviction. His understanding was bold and comprehensive—nothing formed too remote for its reach, or too large for its grasp.

Confirmed by dissipation, and unbroken by pleasure, he never lavished the national revenues to the one, or the national esteem to the other. To his unbroken integrity, the most audacious of all tributary is to bear himself, to that unbounded public confidence which followed him throughout the whole of his political career.

Abandoned, as he was, to the pursuits of public life, he did not neglect to prepare himself to illustrate her higher deliberations, which is to unite the extensive and several of human virtues—his talents, superior and cultivated as they were, as we could have forgotten of that Eternal Wisdom from whence they emanated—the faith and framework of his bid enemies were all [illegible]

at Madrid, by order of Bonaparte, of several Italian subjects, accused of having fire to Madrid. Ten of them were condemned, and ordered to be shot, which sentence was immediately carried into execution. A great many others the evidence was declared insufficient; but they were nevertheless condemned to be detained in prison to prevent the mischief they might do. A Morning Paper, in announcing upon this occasion the decision of justice, says, that "had it not been for their own record these published to the world—it would, perhaps, have scarcely been believed that in modern and barbarous a violation of every principle of justice had really been committed." How extremely when we contemplate the life of this wholesale murderer, there is no tale of cruelty, no crime however monstrous, no violation of justice however manifest, that we can have any difficulty in believing him capable of. It were a waste of time to ask by what right he tried and punished the subjects of another power for doing that in their own country which they had a right to do, which he could [illegible]

Holland also began serializing in the *Recorder* the famous *Stepsure Letters*,[10] by Thomas McCulloch of Pictou. These satirical letters were written with a light touch, but at the same time poked sometimes ungentle fun at the follies and pretensions of such pioneer communities as Pictou. All over the province people saw themselves in the *Letters* and were angry, or saw their neighbours and laughed. In any case they bought the paper.

THE CHARACTER of the province was changing almost from week to week. The ending of the Napoleonic Wars in 1816 brought about an economic depression that drove thousands upon thousands of people to leave the cities and towns of Britain for the unknown in British North America. At this time, too, came the great flood of emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland. To all these people Nova Scotia had a special appeal: it was English (and Gaelic) speaking, the oldest province, the most settled. Though many of the newcomers were illiterate, there were educated people among them as well, and they wanted newspapers, books, circulating libraries.

In those heady years of growth after the war, newspapers appeared, blossomed, were bought and sold, died, changed their names and rose again. The times were stirring, strident, competitive. It is told of the enterprising Anthony Henry Holland that during the war, in the early days of the *Recorder*, he saw a British naval vessel in the harbour of Halifax, rowed out to it, got all the latest newspapers, copied the news into the *Recorder*, and scooped John Howe and William Minns. Holland was a liberal, and his *Recorder* supported the cause of political reform. He had a cantankerous and abusive opponent in Edmund Ward, publisher of the Tory *Free Press*. Ward was more than a mere irritant in Halifax; he was horsewhipped by George Renny Young and beaten up by Philip Holland, and the *Free Press*' constant and malicious needling of Joe Howe undoubtedly gave great support to Howe and the Reform Party movement.

THE
NOVASCOTIAN
NO. I.
VOL.
OR
COLONIAL HERALD:
HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1824.
LITERATURE.
FOR THE NOVASCOTIAN.

The Novascotian. *founded by George Renny Young, was sold in 1828 to the young Joseph Howe (Public Archives of N.S.).*

There was by this time a small but interesting group of men of letters in the Maritime provinces, among them the poet Oliver Goldsmith, author of *The Rising Village*, Canada's first book-length poem in English, and, of course, T. C. Haliburton, the first Canadian writer to achieve international recognition. In 1824-25 George Renny Young (son of the agriculturalist John Young) began publishing *The Novascotian*, and opened its columns to local writers. The following year, J.S. Cunnabell ventured even further with the *Acadian Magazine*, the first purely literary monthly magazine in Canada, with Beamish Murdoch as editor. *Agricola* and *Stepsure* had succeeded, at least in serialized form; Nova Scotia was beginning to have an attractive literary look about it, and Murdoch's first volume was entirely contributed by Maritime writers. The *Acadian* only lasted a year or so, but Cunnabell and his brother William then began another magazine, the *Halifax Monthly*, which in its turn lasted only a couple of years. The Cunnabells were fortunate, since they could pay the bills by doing job printing for the Methodist trade: there was a large market for sermons, discussions on infant baptism and temperance tales.

IN 1828 George Renny Young, age 26, decided to abandon journalism for the law, and sold *The Novascotian* to Joe Howe, also 26, for £1,050, to be paid over five years. The price was reasonable, but Howe was still paying for the *Acadian*, and purchase of *The Novascotian* introduced him to the kind of financial problem he had to struggle with for the rest of his life.

From his earliest days on the *Acadian and General Advertiser*, Joe had held it to be the duty of a printer to promote the cultural development of the province, and this noble view of his function caused him to embark on some very risky publishing. He greatly overestimated the market in Britain for T. C. Haliburton's two-volume *Historical and Statistical Account of Nova-Scotia* (1829), written with the wish of enhancing Nova Scotia's reputation in Britain. Howe printed 3,000 copies, and it took him nearly ten years to pay back the cost. In 1837 he was still remaindering a thousand copies at half price.

Even the success of Haliburton's *Sam Slick* brought Howe no financial rewards. Serialized in *The Novascotian*, the *Sam Slick* sketches had been so popular that Howe published them in book form as *The Clocknaker, or the Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville*. It became the first best-seller in Canadian fiction, making money for Haliburton but almost none for Howe; he had not managed to retain adequate rights as publisher, and pirated editions appeared in both London and Philadelphia. It all cost Howe money.

Probably it was through *The Novascotian* that he contributed most to the awakening of the province. He gave his readers excellent reports on foreign and home affairs and on the proceedings of the Assembly. These were the years when the great political issue was the excessive power of the Legislative Council. Howe had in his youth been a mild Tory, but as the 1830s advanced his political focus changed and he became a political reformer.

In 1835 came the famous libel case. Howe had published two letters signed "The People" (but actually written by a friend), accusing the Halifax magistrates and police of gross corruption. The Attorney General proceeded against him on a charge of criminal libel. In one of the most famous cases in courtroom history in Nova Scotia, Howe pleaded his own case before a jury. It was his first opportunity to use his full powers as an orator, and he was triumphantly acquitted. Halifax came out in celebration. It was March, with snow on the ground; every sled in town joined in a procession in Howe's honour, and the celebrations lasted for a day and a half.

"The Nova Scotia press is free!" he proclaimed in *The Novascotian*. His victory is often acclaimed as having established freedom of the press in Canada. But there is an element of grandiloquence in that claim. Nova Scotia had no libel law but relied on British law. In fact, not until 1843 did the British parliament enact a statute which gave the press freedom to use the truth of the libel as a defense in criminal libel cases, if it could be shown that the publication of the alleged libel was for the public benefit.[1]

Nonetheless *The Novascotian* became one of the leading newspapers in British North America, and the trial set Howe on his political career. In 1836 he was elected to the Assembly for the county of Halifax. His election platform was simple: "All we ask for is what exists at home [Britain] – a system of responsibility to the people."

Joseph Howe (N.S. Legislative Library).

In 1841 he became speaker of the Assembly. At the end of the year he retired from the paper and sold his entire printing establishment. In his last editorial (December 30, 1841) he rejoiced in the rich rewards of the many Sunday evenings he had devoted to the education of his apprentices. Four of them had gained the top position on Maritime newspapers, and the fifth, Richard Nugent, would be the new proprietor and printer of *The Novascotian*.

However, in its early years *The Novascotian* had not yet become the voice of the reform movement. Halifax, as the colonial capital, was perhaps too close to the centre of

authority, and in any case Joe Howe was still an apprentice in politics. It was in the countryside that the great drive for reform was gathering force. The first newspaper to call for responsible government in the British North American colonies was the *Colonial Patriot* of Pictou, established in 1827. The editor was Jotham Blanchard, a man of vision and conviction and a former student of the Rev. Thomas McCulloch, founder of Pictou Academy. Pictou was already disliked by official Halifax as being a centre of dissent: it had been at odds with the Legislative Council for some years over the question of funds for Pictou Academy,[12] and McCulloch had written the *Stepsure Letters* as a means of raising the necessary money. All the frustrations of living under a colonial government spilled onto the pages of the *Colonial Patriot*.

Pictou is an interesting example of the way in which newspapers responded to local needs and situations. It was inevitable that the *Patriot's* outspoken policy would produce a reaction. The government party sponsored a rival paper as the voice of opposition to reform. The *Pictou Observer* had a brief life. Blanchard was elected to the Assembly, and the *Colonial Patriot* itself closed down in 1833. In 1836 James Dawson of Pictou bought the *Patriot* press and type and began another paper, *The Bee*, devoted to politics and literature and also to agriculture, a matter of growing importance in Pictou County. Four years later John Stiles bought the business and changed the name of the newspaper to the *Mechanic and Farmer*; later still it merged with the *Eastern Chronicle*.

A town at the other end of the province, Yarmouth, was the second to acquire its own local newspaper. In 1833 Alexander Lawson of Pictou, one-time apprentice on the *Colonial Patriot*, established the *Yarmouth Herald*. The press had been imported from Bermuda, one of the old style wooden frame presses with a stone bed and a wooden (mahogany) platen. It was later sold to James Bowes of Halifax, who in turn sold it to George Fenety of Saint John, who used it to print the *Saint John News*, the first penny paper in the Maritime provinces.

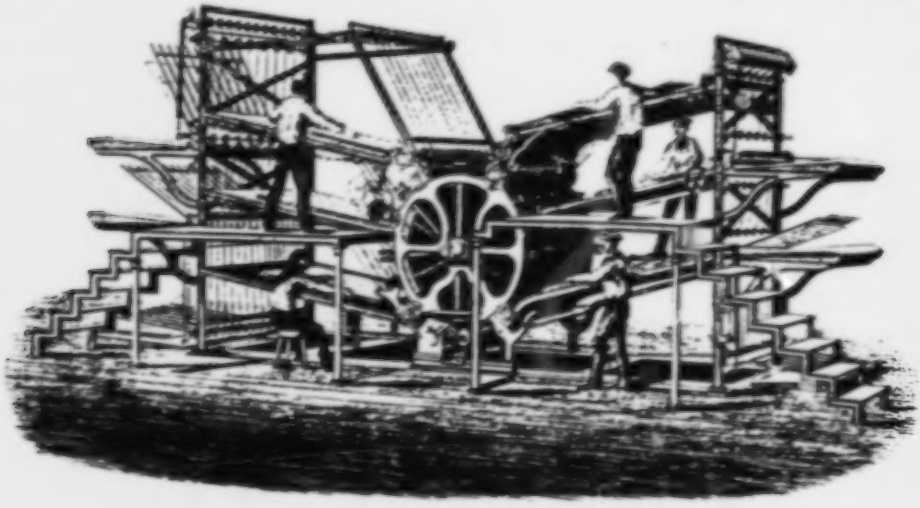
IN SPITE of its survival record, the day of that old wooden press was truly past. There had been major developments in the printing industry in Britain and the United States: steam power joined with cylinder presses. Richard Hoe of

New York built the first true rotary press (1844), in which both the forme and the impressing platen were cylinders. This press had to be housed in a very large room, but a six-cylinder press could turn out 6,000 impressions an hour, and a ten-cylinder machine up to 20,000. It did not mean the end of the old hand metal presses, which were used in many print shops well into the 20th century, particularly for quality book and magazine printing. But this new rotary press was the machine that revolutionized the North American production of newspapers and cheap books.

It was William Cunnabell of Halifax who in 1840 was the first in Canada to apply steam power to a press (a Washington), and within ten years presses combining steam and cylinders were to be found across the country. Machinery rather than wages had become the most expensive item in a printer's operation.

No type foundries were established in Nova Scotia; although the number of newspapers continued to grow, they did not add up to a profitable market for a local foundry. In any case, printers could rent type, presses and other equipment from a larger centre. In 1895 the Dominion Type Foundry in Montreal leased a Washington hand press, complete with type, to Bertram Bourinot of Canso, "being plant for the publication of the *Canso Breeze*". The cost of two years' rental was only $70.

The Hoe steam powered rotary press.



The letter A reproduced from William Caslon's first type specimen broadside, published in 1734.

A phototypeset letter A developed from the original Caslon by the Compugraphic Corp. This booklet is typeset in Caslon 224.

By the 1820s American foundry type was the equal of English type and much more easily obtained. Joseph Howe, and no doubt other printers, used two sources: Greele and Willis's New England Type Foundry and the Boston Type and Stereotype Foundry. The oldest type foundry in Canada, Palsgrave (later Montreal Type Foundry), did not start in business until 1836. After 1867, type and printers' materials of every description were supplied by the aptly named Dominion Type Foundry, agents for a number of American firms, including the famous George Bruce's New York Type Foundry. Dominion had agents all over Eastern Canada.

In an industry so dependent on technology, it is curious that there have been such long periods when so little changed. All-metal hand presses were introduced in 1800, but it was the 1840s before power presses became general. Although the 19th century was a time of exciting, expanding inventiveness, it was another forty years before everything changed once more. Linotype was patented in the United States in 1884, first used in 1886; its invention led to the development of Monotype. Its usefulness was immediately recognized, and more and more large jobs were printed on these machines. But well into the mid-twentieth century most printers could set type by hand, and until recently it was they who handled the very special work requiring top quality printing. Indeed, a number of older printers in Halifax can still hand-set a page of type with speed and skill. It was the time spent in breaking up the type after use that doubled the cost of hand-set type and was the biggest deterrent to its continued use. Today, a hundred years after the invention of Linotype, printers are once more facing major changes as the result of the development of computer-generated typesetting.

POWER PRESSES and cheaper paper gave newspaper publishers the means by which they could lower their prices and increase their circulation. As the 19th century advanced, the province grew and changed continuously. The increase in population required more of everything, schools in particular, and with the schools an increased need for textbooks. The literacy rate jumped, and with it the demand for

cheap books. Books were no longer luxuries imported from Britain for the well-to-do; many small towns in Nova Scotia had bookstores and circulating libraries. Edmund Ward, late of the *Free Press*, had considerable success in Halifax with an agency for cheap books and periodicals.

Business became more sophisticated; generally people were becoming better informed. By 1868 Halifax had its Publishers' Row: the streets between the Grand Parade and the harbour, along Barrington Street and south to Sackville Street held nineteen printing and/or publishing offices, twelve booksellers and stationers, seven bookbinders, two engravers and one lithographer. It was a buoyant time.

Bookbinding.

Anthony Henry Holland had gone by rowboat to collect the latest war dispatches from the sailing vessel in Halifax harbour. Not so many years later the printer-publishers of Nova Scotia could take advantage of the new quick means of transportation and communication: steamships and railroads, and roads built for fast horse travel. Which of them could have imagined then that in 1849 the Associated Press of America would open a telegraph service in Halifax? It thus became the first city in North America with a special office and wire service to handle European news. On opening day, November 15, 1849, the mail steamer arrived in Halifax harbour at 7:30 p.m., transmission of a 3,000 word abstract was started at 8 p.m., and by 11 p.m. New York had the latest news from Europe, sent by wire from Halifax.

Every small town aimed at acquiring its own print shop and its own weekly newspaper. Like the town criers of old,

Transmitting the news by telegraph.

the weeklies gave all the really important news. They also campaigned for local causes, ran crusades, kept everyone in touch. It is sad to reflect, however, that all this activity was only in English. *The Quebec Gazette/La Gazette de Québec*, first issued on June 21, 1764, was bilingual. But in Nova Scotia, John Bushell's bilingual proclamation in French and English and Anthony Henry's almanac in German were never repeated.

It was 1867 before the first French language newspaper appeared in the Maritime provinces (in Shediac, New Brunswick), and 1887 before *La Voix d'Evangeline* was published in Digby. Gaelic fared a little better; in Antigonish a short-lived publication, *An Gaitear og Gaelich – The Young Highland Visitor*, produced one or two issues in 1851. The most substantial Gaelic publication, however, was *MacTalla*, which did not begin publication until 1892, lived on in Sydney for some years, and is still fondly remembered by Gaelic speakers and scholars, especially in Cape Breton. There seems never to have been any other publishing in German in Nova Scotia.

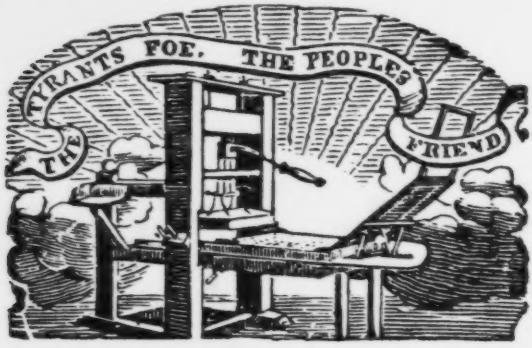
EVEN BEFORE CONFEDERATION, British North America was growing into something more than a linked group of colonies created out of 18th century wars. By 1871 the population of Nova Scotia had risen to almost 390,000, that of the three Maritime provinces together to a total of nearly 800,000. But the census figures of that year show Quebec with a population of 1,200,000, Ontario with 1,620,000. The forces of geography, history and immigration had determined that the centre of things would move westward.

In Nova Scotia, newspapers continued to start, to flourish, to die and rise again in another form. Printers and publishers continued to be part of the society of zesty risk-takers who had given Nova Scotia its salty flavour. As trade developed, publishing became a separate industry from printing; that too was a risk. During the late years of the 19th century some excellent Nova Scotian books appeared on the bookstore shelves, but no one could deny that the centre of the Canadian book publishing industry was in Toronto.

Events move on. During recent years in Nova Scotia both book publishing and book printing are enjoying a renaissance, and better books than ever before are coming off Nova Scotian presses.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTVUWXYZ

FROM THE BEGINNING there has been a transforming relationship between printing presses and the words they print. Putting an idea into print can give it authority, reality, even permanence. Nova Scotia was fortunate in this: the years in which the Legislative Council in Halifax was abusing its power were also the years that produced not only Joseph Howe, but also such men as Jotham Blanchard and Thomas McCulloch – and, by extension, the Scottish printers John Neilson in Quebec and William Lyon Mackenzie in Upper Canada. All of them were men with a burning sense of the need for political change, all of them with access to a printing press, all of them involved with the bourgeois revolutions of their time. They were the inheritors of the great traditions of the late 18th century – of the Scottish Enlightenment, of the French democratic ideal, of American republicanism. It was the printing press that gave to such men of ideas the opportunity to put those ideas into action.



CHRONOLOGY

OF PRINTING DEVELOPMENTS

c. 1440 Johannes Gutenberg invents movable type

1638 First printing press arrives in North America from England

1749 Halifax is founded

1751 First press brought to Halifax by Bartholomew Green

1752 *Halifax Gazette*, first newspaper published in Canada, begun by John Bushell

1761 Anthony Henry assumes control of *Halifax Gazette*

1766 *Halifax Gazette* ceases publication after government support is withdrawn because of material protesting the Stamp Act

1766 *Nova-Scotia Gazette* (weekly) begun by Robert Fletcher

1769 *Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser* begun by Anthony Henry

1770 Anthony Henry absorbs *Nova-Scotia Gazette*

1776 John Howe comes to Halifax

1780 *Halifax Journal* begun by John Howe

1783-84 Loyalist immigration brings several printers to Shelburne: *Royal American Gazette*, *Port Roseway Gazette and the Shelburne Advertiser*, and the *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser* begun

1786 *Weekly Chronicle* begun by William Minns

1789 *Nova-Scotia Magazine and Comprehensive Review of Literature, Politics and News*, first Canadian periodical, begun, edited by Dr. William Cochran, Windsor, N.S.

1800 First all-metal press invented by the third Earl Stanhope

1801 John Howe becomes King's Printer

1813 *Acadian Recorder*, first newspaper to criticize government policy regularly, begun by Anthony Holland

c. 1816 Columbian press developed in Philadelphia by George Clymer

1819 Iron toggle-joint press patented by John Wells

1819 First paper mill in Nova Scotia established in Bedford by Anthony Henry Holland

c. 1820 All-metal presses (Albion, Washington) become available in North America

1824-25 *The Novascotian* begun by George Renny Young

1827 *The Acadian and General Advertiser* begun by Joseph Howe

1827 *Colonial Patriot* established in Pictou

1828 Joseph Howe buys *The Novascotian*, which becomes the leading newspaper in Nova Scotia

1833 *The Bee* begun by James Dawson

1833 *Yarmouth Herald* begun by Alexander Lawson

1840 William Cunnabell of Halifax becomes first in Canada to apply steam power to a press (Washington)

1844 First true rotary press built by Richard Hoe of New York

1849 Associated Press opens telegraph service in Halifax

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NOTES

1. *The Clockmaker, or the Sayings and Doings of Sam Slick of Slickville*, 1836 *et seq.*

2. Bartholomew Green was possibly not the first printer to come to Halifax, for the passenger list of the *Winchelsea*, one of Cornwallis' fleet at the founding of Halifax in 1749, includes the name of Herbert Jefferie, described as a "printer". As nothing more is known of him, however, it is supposed that he never worked in Nova Scotia.

3. No such enterprise as a printing shop existed in either Quebec or Nova Scotia during the French regime. The first press in Quebec City was brought there in 1764, after Quebec had become a part of British North America.

4. Nova Scotia's *Royal Gazette* of today is the lineal descendant of the *Halifax Gazette*. It publishes notices of the appointment of ministers, lists regulations under new Acts, etc.

5. Professor Robert MacGregor Dawson and his colleague, Professor Fred Matthews, have built a wooden press that is part of the collection of early presses housed in the print shop at Dalhousie University. In addition to his other academic duties, Professor Dawson teaches a short course in hand-set printing. He has the title of Master Printer to the University and is pleased to show visitors some of the mysteries of the ancient craft.

6. Marie Tremaine. *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800.*

7. Blankets, or other soft materials, were laid between paper and platen. A piece of blanket can be seen in position on the Wells press at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

8. George L. Parker. *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada*, p. 46.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

10. Thomas McCulloch's *The Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure* was not published in book form until issued by English and Blackader in Halifax in 1862. The book is available today in the New Canadian Library paperback edition.

11. J. Murray Beck. *Joseph Howe, Vol. I*, p. 141.

12. The Legislative Council was one of the pillars of the colonial system of government, its members being appointed either by the governor in Halifax or from London. The Council had veto powers over the elected House of Assembly, and exercised that veto whenever it saw fit.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS is the story of the origins of Nova Scotia's printing industry. The economic development of the province was aided, promoted and reported by early printing, often working with handmade presses and paper. *First Impressions* provides a fascinating insight into an industry which rarely prints anything about itself.

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